

VZCZCXRO8527  
PP RUEHROV  
DE RUEHTV #0612 0580806  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 270806Z FEB 07  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9631  
INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS BE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 000612

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/25/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [EUN](#) [IS](#)  
SUBJECT: EU SEE GREATER ROLE FOR ISRAELI MFA IN RAFAH  
CROSSING ISSUES

Classified By: Political Counselor Marc Sievers; Reasons 1.4 (b and d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: European Union Special Representative Marc Otte described increased Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) involvement in the Rafah crossing in a February 16 meeting with United States Security Coordinator (USSC). The EU-Border Assistance Mission (EU-BAM) is set to expire in May 2007. Otte and Pedro Serrano, from the European Commission's Risk Management Authority, believe the MFA's involvement in Rafah will help achieve a GoI commitment to the normalization of Rafah. End summary.

¶2. (C) Otte relayed to the USSC that in January he delivered a demarche to the MFA encouraging the GOI to uphold its international commitment to normalize operations at the Rafah crossing. Otte said that the MFA, led by MFA senior Deputy Director General Yossi Gal, responded by holding an GOI interagency meeting in early February with the EU on the normalization of the Rafah crossing -- by addressing the flow of people and goods of concern through Rafah -- and the extension of the EU-BAM. Israeli inter-agency participation at the meeting with the EU consisted of representatives from Shin Beit, the Ministry of Finance and the Israeli Defense Force. The EU was represented by Otte, Pedro Serrano, from the European Commission's Risk Management Authority, and EU-BAM head of mission LTG Pietro Pistolese. Both Otte and Serrano were encouraged that the MFA's increased level of participation in the EU-BAM renewal process will help attain a GoI commitment to the normalization of Rafah.

¶3. (C) Serrano said that he made it clear in the MFA meeting that before the EU can commit to extending the EU-BAM for another 18-month period, the GoI must agree that normalizing operations at Rafah is the goal for the renewal period. Both Serrano and Otte told the USSC that they were committed to pressing this message to the GOI, that the EU-BAM will not be extended without this agreement from the GOI to normalize operations. Serrano said the EU reserved the possibility of moving EU-BAM personnel to El Arish (the Egyptian side of Rafah) to circumvent the GoI effectively closing Rafah by denying the transit of EU-BAM staff through Rafah for work. Serrano said he made it clear in the meeting that the existing structures, namely the Security Working Group, must be utilized for higher level policy discussions on security concerns at the Rafah crossing.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Visit Embassy Tel Aviv's Classified Website:  
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/telaviv>

You can also access this site through the State Department's  
Classified SIPRNET website.

\*\*\*\*\*  
JONES